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tion that members of a family are always ready to give each other. Relatives are inclined to exchange presents chiefly among themselves, but there is a constant giving and receiving among all of the people of the village of Hanga-roa.

THE LIFE CYCLE

Birth

Children are always welcomed into a family and the rapid increase of the Easter Island population in the last fifty years indicates the fertility of most of the married couples. There are now 216 children under 13 years of age. I never heard of a woman who was annoyed at the prospect of having a child or of a woman who had an abortion. The desire for children is illustrated by the following popular Easter Island tale, which was given to me as an actual recent incident:

> A woman named Rere-ao slept with her husband but saw that she would never have a child. One day she noticed a woman who was pregnant. She pretended to be pregnant too. She also pretended to suffer when the pregnant woman felt the first pains of labor. The other woman gave birth to a child. Rere-ao said to the midwives, "You stay here. I must go out to defecate." She went to the house of the woman to whom the child had been born. She said, "Give me this child. I want to suckle it." The woman passed the child to her and she stole it. She put it in front between her tapa skirt and her waist. Then she returned to her house and said to the women sitting there, "Hurry and take my child." They came to deliver the child and it was born from the front part of her bosom. The real parents looked for their child who had been stolen by Rere-ao. They came to the house of Rere-ao and said, "The child is ours. Why did you steal him?" Then they said to the people, "She only pretended to have a child and for that reason she has taken our child. She is Rere-ao, stealer of the child." The parents took their child back, and thereafter the people made fun of Rere-ao and called her Rere-ao-toki-poki (Rere-ao-the-stealer-of-the-child).

The present islanders do not care whether they have sons or daughters. Formerly sons were preferred, as in many parts of Polynesia. "The son has to carry on the line, succeed to the title and inherit the estate" (31, p. 37). Father Zumbohm (230, vol. 6, p. 131) writes:

> . . . If the newborn child was a boy, there was great rejoicing, but if it was a daughter there was less enthusiasm. All of the affection of the family was bestowed upon the first born son, whereas the last one was despised; he bore a nickname that nobody pronounced without laughing.

Pregnancy

At the third or fifth month of pregnancy, but never in the fourth or later than the fifth month, the husband's father offered an earth oven to the parents of the expectant mother. This oven was called *umu takapu moa kokoma* (*takapu*, ceremonial earth oven; *moa kokoma*, intestines of the fowls) and was "proportioned to the number of sweet potatoes or fowls they had at their disposal" (230, vol. 6, p. 130). The food cooked in it was presented with the words, "Umu takapu moa ka kai" (Eat the earth oven of fowl's intestines), and eaten on the spot. The name of this feast was *rae* (the first fruits, the

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many men he had killed in war, how many chickens he had stolen." A man named Kapiera told Routledge (194, pp. 251-252) that the earliest *tau* was made by an ancestor of Hotu-matua, the first king of the island. A large tablet contained a list of the lesser tablets "giving merely the name of each hero and the year of his *koro*." The names were enumerated and followed with figures corresponding to the year when the *koro* was celebrated. The numbers went to ten, then began again. "If there were two *koro* in a year, they came under the same numeral."

There was also a tablet for *ika* (murdered men). It was known to only one person, "who taught it to a pupil, and the two divided the island between them, the master taking the west and the north coast to Anakena and the pupil the remainder. A connected, or possibly the same tablet, was made at the instance of the relatives of the victim and helped to secure vengeance" (194, p. 248).

Some tablets dealt with ceremonies, and others were part of ceremonies themselves. They were in evidence at *koro*, where Nga-ara and the professors used to "pray for the father" and where a woman went onto the roof of the house holding the "kohau-o-te-pure" (prayer tablet). "In another case, a woman who wished to honour her father-in-law, and at the same time secure fertility, set up a pole round which she walked holding a child and a tablet, given her by Nga-ara while he and other *rongorongo* men who brought their *kohau* at his order stood by and sang" (194, p. 249). Thirteen subjects were dealt with in the tablets. No mention was made either to Routledge or me of genealogies, lists of *ariki*, or the wanderings of the people.

The tablets were said to be tapu and were handled only by the *rongorongo* men and their servants. When kept in the hut they were wrapped in mats and hung from the roof. During war they were regarded by the victorious party as valuable spoils.

Tablets are first mentioned in 1864 by Eyraud (81, vol. 38, p. 71) who says they were found in almost every house although the natives did not understand their meaning and showed little respect for them. Several years later Zumbohm (230, vol. 6, p. 232) collected some tablets and attempted unsuccessfully to learn the meaning of the incised signs. He gathered the most learned natives who "seemed pleased" to see the tablet and told him its name. Then some started to read the page by "chanting." But others disagreed on the chant and the discouraged missionary gave up his inquiry. Roussel (190, p. 464) scarcely mentions the tablets and assumes that the characters never had a meaning. "The few natives who pretended to know them, recited when tested only ridiculous and meaningless tales." It is worth stressing that Roussel speaks of the tablets in connection with the native chants.

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836 by the people as a necking party is in the United States. There is seldom, if ever, any secrecy surrounding such momentary love matches, and whereas the girls come [522] in for a certain amount of joking from the older people, it is the boys who bear the greater brunt of the jokes. A term commonly heard in such joking sessions is that of *muy tatani* (very devilish) and it is used to describe the feelings of a young [747] man or woman toward his, or her, partner. Such premarital affairs are regarded as quite normal and natural, in spite of the nominal acceptance of the Catholic [392] faith, and, as my workmen once pointed out, a young man is naturally *muy toro* and must have his girls and stay up late at night. However, when a person reaches the age of about thirty he is described as being only *medio torito*.

848 Should a child be born out of wedlock there is never a curse on mother, child, or father. On Easter Island, as in many parts of the rural world, a large family [542] is looked upon as highly desirable since the children can eventually help with the work. With this concept well entrenched in the culture of the island, a girl bringing a child with her into marriage constitutes an advantageous acquisition.

431 A side light on the problems of courting comes from a statement made by 836 Martin Rapu, one of our foremen. Martin reflected that when he was young and unmarried (he is now twenty-two and was married at twenty) he changed girls often and it was much trouble and quiet costly, for he had to give each new girl [581] presents from time to time. Finally his father advised him to get married, for he, the father, could no longer afford the gifts that Martin needed each time he changed girls. Martin then added that he had found married life a lot calmer and more peaceful than that of his premarital years.

584 When a boy has finally decided upon the girl he wants to marry he may ask for her through her parents in one of two ways. He may go personally to the girl's father or mother and ask for the girl. If he is accepted he returns home immediately and notifies his father of the fact. The father then goes to the house of the girl's parents and the two families give a party to which their respective extended family relatives are invited. Both families join in furnishing liquor and food for the affair, though the boy's father may go through the ceremony of pouring the first [583] round of drinks. At this time there appears to be a small exchange of gifts between the families, apparently no more than a token exchange, for Jorge mentioned that a little money might change hands, but in telling of it he did not seem to regard it as much of anything.

The second method of arranging a marriage is for the youth to tell his father of the girl he wishes to marry. It then becomes the father's duty to go to the house of the girl and, bringing with him a little liquor, ask the father or mother of the girl for permission for his son to marry her. Consent appears to be primarily